

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 008024

70

ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 NEA-10 SS-20 CPR-02 L-03

/088 R

DRAFTED BY AF/P:BARUSSELL:ADR

APPROVED BY AF/P:JALINEHAN

AF/N:DMACK

----- 099246

R 142229Z JAN 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:PFOR LY TS

SUBJECT:PRESS Q & A TUNISIAN-LIBYAN MERGER

1. FOLLOWING ARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S RESPONSES TO
QUERIES AT PRESS BRIEFING MONDAY (BEGIN TEXT):

Q. HAVE YOU ANY THOUGHT ABOUT THE TUNISIAN MERGER WITH
LIBYA?

A. WELL, BASICALLY THE MERGER ANNOUNCED OVER THE WEEKEND
IS A BILATERAL MATTER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES INVOLVED
AND WE WOULD REGARD THEIR DECISION ON UNION AS ESSENTIALLY
SOMETHING WE WOULDN'T COMMENT ON. THAT IS NOT OUR AFFAIR.

Q. IS THAT IT?

A. YES.

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Q. WERE YOU OFFICIALLY INFORMED?

A. I JUST HAVE TO ANSWER RIGHT NOW I DON'T KNOW WHETHER
WE WERE INFORMED. I CAN FIND OUT.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT KNOW IF THE PROSPECT HERE IS
THAT ITS FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE GROUPING WILL TEND IN

THE DIRECTION OF ITS RELATIONS WITH LIBYA OR WITH
TUNISIA?

A. IT IS A LITTLE EARLY TO SAY.

Q. WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH ALL THE MONEY YOU SAVE BY
ELIMINATING ONE AMBASSADOR?

A. REALLY IT IS TOO EARLY TO DISCUSS ANY OF THE MECHANICS
OR THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS THAT WILL AFFECT OUR
INTERESTS IN THE TWO COUNTRIES. WE WILL JUST HAVE TO
WAIT AND SEE.

(DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT)

RUSH

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NNN

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